



NRCS in Napa County Watersheds

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NRCS – Who We Are & What We Do

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is a non-regulatory agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). NRCS employees provide leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment. We have continued to provide free technical assistance in the Napa River, Putah Creek, and Suisun watersheds of Napa County since 1945. Our technical expertise includes agronomy, ecology, engineering, erosion control, geology, rangeland management, soil science, surveying, and wildlife biology. We work in partnership with the Napa County Resource Conservation District (NCRCD). The services we offer include conservation planning and technical assistance, cost-share (incentive) funding, and partnership to help you manage and enhance your soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources. NRCS assists in the installation of conservation practices that are proven to address one or more resource concerns identified by the landowner. Here are a few examples of the treatments that have been installed in Napa County.

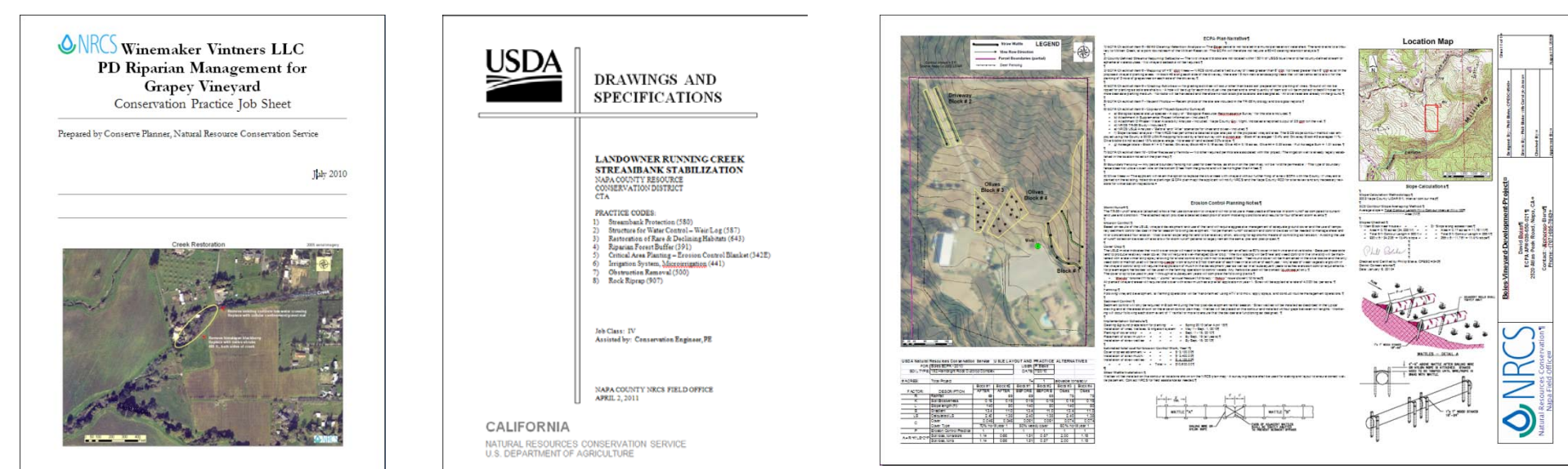
Technical In-Field Services

NRCS personnel offer a number of in-field technical services including topographic (not legal) surveying, GPS mapping of vegetation and other features, soil surveying, field reconnaissance, construction inspection of NRCS-specified practices, etc.



Plan Types NRCS Can Prepare in Napa County

Vineyard, Farm, Forest, or Rangeland Conservation Plan
Erosion Control Plans (ECP) for Vineyard Replanting
Water Quality Plans for TMDL Compliance in the Putah Creek and Napa River Watersheds



Hillside Erosion Control & Surface Runoff Management

Sediment basins, grassed waterways, conservation cover crops, straw wattles, lined diversion ditches, mulching, vegetated buffers, and surface drainage pipes in various combinations both prevent sediment detachment and reduce sediment delivery off-site into riparian waterways.



Cover Crops, Mulching, & Hedgerows

Cover crops, grassed waterways, mulching, and green or composted manure have the benefits of improved erosion control as well as improved soil health and nutrient content. Additionally, cover crops, hedgerows, and other plantings attract beneficial insects that can play a role in integrated pest management (IPM) and organic certification. Targeted grazing by sheep or goats in the vineyard can reduce fuel inputs and provide a source, albeit small, of fertilizers. Similarly, targeted grazing in forested lands can reduce fire fuel loads by reducing forest understory.



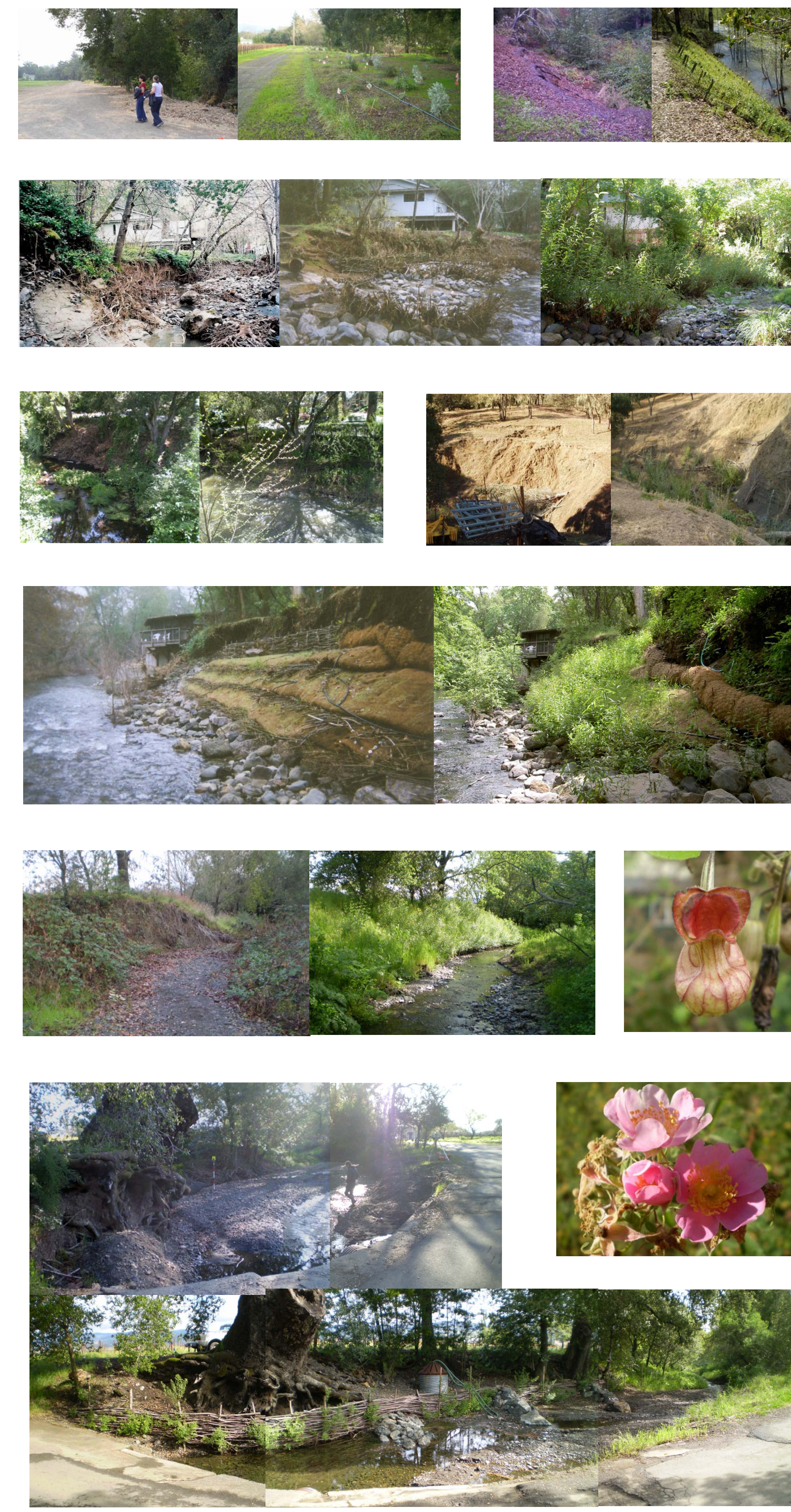
Access Road Runoff Management

Access roads, both flat and sloped, that have a solid, drive-able, non-erodible base, that are designed to manage storm flows, and that are carefully monitored during winter months will deliver less sediment-laden runoff to downstream waterways and will maintain a more pleasantly traveled path.



Stream Restoration & Stabilization

NRCS has assisted on over 30 projects on over a dozen Napa County Streams in the last 5 years. These projects reduce streambank soil erosion, enhance the native canopy, improve wildlife habitat along the riparian corridor, reduce pressure from Pierce's Disease host plants, and manage invasive plant species. Most in-stream erosion control treatments use bioengineered techniques which involve the use of vegetative materials like willows and tree stumps for stabilization rather than structural materials like rocks and concrete. Below are a series of before (left) and after (right) pictures of projects that include riparian revegetation, willow brush mattresses, rock stream barbs, willow baffles, terraced willow wall revetments, use of large wood (rootwads), rock riprap at the bank toe, and reinforced soil and willow brush layering. NRCS has also provided consultation on a few of the large-scale stream projects in the county including the Napa Creek flood control project and the Rutherford Dust Restoration.



Irrigation Water Management

Proper design, installation, and use of water meters, soil moisture sensors, weather tracking stations, and other water tracking technologies have allowed growers to more accurately determine when they need to irrigate and how much needs to be applied which reduces irrigation water use, reduces power consumption by way of reduced pumping, and often increases crop quality.



Livestock Grazing Management & Water Development

Tanks, troughs, and fences are tools that livestock producers can use to improve the distribution of cattle and sheep on their rangeland and reduce the impact of grazing animals on sensitive waterways.



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